

Amendments to the Claims

Listing of claims:

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for separating ~~disc-shaped~~ discrete bodies from a source body having a face and a longitudinal direction, the apparatus including a separating device; an advance device for advancing the source body towards the separating device; an optical detection device for determining the face ~~contour~~ area of the source body ~~and having~~ ; a tunnel in which the source body is guided, the tunnel having an end adjacent the separating device; a plurality of lamps for illuminating the surrounding environment of the face; means for mounting the lamps in the tunnel for illuminating in a planar fashion along the longitudinal direction of the source body such that the face and the surroundings of the face have an optical contrast, wherein the optical detection device determines the area of the face by means of the said optical contrast between the surrounding environment of the face and the face, and the source body is advanced as a function of the measured face area as determined by the optical detection device. ; the improvement comprising:

~~a tunnel in which the source body is guided, the tunnel having an end adjacent the separating device, and means for mounting the lamps in the tunnel and in a planar fashion along the longitudinal direction of the source body.~~

14. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the tunnel is made of a reflective material.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the tunnel comprises a first region in which the lamps deliver diffuse radiation with an intensity which is reduced towards the face, wherein the first region consists of ~~the~~ a front surface of the tunnel at the face, ~~the~~ a central region of the ~~cover~~ tunnel, ~~the~~ front and central portions of ~~the~~ side walls and ~~the~~ a bottom of the tunnel.

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the tunnel comprises a second region in which the lamps deliver radiation directed rearwards away from the face, wherein the second region is composed of the front portion of the ~~cover~~ tunnel adjacent to the face.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the tunnel comprises a third region in which the lamps deliver radiation directed obliquely forwards towards the ~~face~~ end of the tunnel adjacent the separating device, wherein the third region is composed of ~~the~~ a rear region of the cover tunnel.

18. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the tunnel comprises a fourth region in which the lamps deliver radiation directed straight onto the ~~source body~~ advanced device provided at the bottom of the tunnel, wherein the fourth region is composed of the central region of the exposed side wall.

19. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the side wall of a lighting frame provided for contacting with which the source body is in contact is slidable.

20. (New) An apparatus for separating discrete bodies from a larger comestible body having a face and a longitudinal direction, the apparatus comprising:

a separating device for separating the discrete bodies from the comestible body;

a fixed lighting frame constructed and arranged to form a tunnel for guiding the comestible body in the longitudinal direction, the lighting frame having a proximate end adjacent the separating device and a distal end for receiving the comestible body;

a plurality of lights mounted on the lighting frame for illuminating the tunnel and the comestible body so that there is an optical contrast between the face of the comestible body and a space between it and an inside of the tunnel;

an advance device for advancing the comestible body through the lighted tunnel and towards the separating device;

receiving means for receiving the discrete bodies separated by the separating device;

means for mounting the separating device, the lighting frame and the advance device at an incline to the receiving means;

means for detecting the optical contrast between the space and the face when at the proximate end of the lighting frame and for determining the area of the face; and

control means for causing the advance device to advance the comestible body a distance as a function of the area of the face so that discrete bodies of substantially equal volume are separated by the separating device.

21. (New) An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the means for detecting an optical contrast includes a camera.

22. (New) An apparatus according to claim 20, further including a hold down device.

23. (New) An apparatus according to claim 22, including means for illuminating the hold down device so there is no shadow and so that it appears as part of the space and not the face.

24. (New) An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the lighting frame, the advance device, and the separating device are inclined at approximately forty-five degrees.

25. (New) An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the camera is at a substantially flat angle.

26. (New) An apparatus for separating discrete bodies from a larger comestible body having a face and a longitudinal direction, the apparatus comprising:

a fixed lighting frame constructed and arranged to form an opening for guiding the comestible body in the longitudinal direction, the lighting frame having proximate and distal ends, the opening receiving the comestible body at the distal end;

a plurality of lighting elements mounted within the lighting frame for illuminating the opening of the lighting frame but not the face of the comestible body;

an advance device for advancing the comestible body in the longitudinal direction through the lighting frame and towards the proximate end;

a camera positioned to optically capture the face and the opening of the lighting frame at the proximate end;

a detection device operatively connected to the camera for detecting an optical contrast between the face and the aperture at the proximate end of the lighting frame; and

a movable separating device located intermediate the camera and the proximate end of the lighting frame.

27. (New) An apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the lighting frame, the advance device, and the separating device are inclined.

28. (New) An apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the lighting frame, the advance device, and the separating device are inclined at approximately forty-five degrees.

29. (New) An apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the camera is at a substantially flat angle.

30. (New) An apparatus according to claim 26, further including a hold down device.